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IRises of all colors announce Spring, Sankei-en garden, Yokohama, Japan.(Photo: Shawn Nguyen)

The Houston Bonsai Society usually meets on the first Saturday of the month at Trini Mendenhall Community Center, 1414 Wirt Road, Houston, TX 77055. Board meeting at 9 AM, refreshments at 10 AM, program at 10:15 AM.

April 6 No HBS monthly meeting, no HBS Saturday Study Group this month. We will have a volunteer orientation meeting for the convention at Pete Parker’s house from 10-12 Noon, to go over details for convention. More volunteers are welcome.

Upcoming Events  More in Calendar of Events

April 6 Texas State Shohin meeting at Persimmon Hill Bonsai, 12001 Red Hawk Cove in Austin – 10AM till 2:30PM.

April 11-14 Bonsai on the Bayou, the Lone Star Bonsai Federation and American Bonsai Society's annual convention, featuring Ryan Neil, Boon Manakitivipart, Will Baddeley, held at the Marriott Westchase, Houston, TX.

April 27 Bonsai Basics #2: Styling & Wiring, Timeless Trees, 12 Noon - 4PM, $60 include a tree (Ficus, boxwood or Podocarpus), wire cutters, hand-out and wire. Focus: basic styling and wiring a tree. No repotting at this time.

May 4 HBS meeting Program: Sergio Cuan.

May 11 HBS Saturday Study Group, Timeless Trees, 9AM – Noon. Free, come and work with other members of HBS on your trees. Please bring your trees, tools, soil, wire, etc. Refreshments provided.

May 18 Bonsai Basics #1, Timeless Trees Nursery, 9AM – 1PM. Focus is on repotting and initial branch selection. $60 include a tree, ceramic pot, soil, wire, hand-out, and a pair of scissors. We will re-pot the trees into a ceramic pot.
April Bonsai Care

Recently at a workshop, where I was helping, on some trees which had been repotted more than once, I noticed that roots from the original 2” training pot had bent back toward the center and keep on growing strong. That is the reason why on your first repotting, whether starting with nursery material or collected trees, all the old soil should be removed so you can see the root ball and make all necessary corrections early. Later on, when the tree has grown larger, you would have a good nebari.

We have had more rain this year and not as much cold weather as usual. Damp weather is most favorable for insect infestations (aphids are showing up everywhere) as well as fungal problems. Mildew normally not seen until it gets much warmer is showing up already as well as leaf spot this year.

Leaf spot can be serious on Catlin and Chinese elms, and hollies. There are organic fungicides available, baking soda is one. Check with organic nurseries or bonsai publications. A hydrogen peroxide mix of 1 part standard 3% solution with 2 parts water is recommended but it can still damage the new tender foliage.

A good organic program takes care of both the feeding and the insect problems. The trick is to be sure to thoroughly cover the plant including all the leaf axils. Use a hand or pump-up sprayer to get a fine spray to cover top and bottom. A hose end sprayer does not cover all foliage well. This is also true if you use commercial chemical sprays.

I recommend the organic mixture of 1 tablespoon each of fish emulsion, liquid kelp, molasses and apple cider vinegar to a gallon of water. I use the mixture both as a foliar feed spray and as a soil drench fertilizer. As a weekly foliar spray, for me anyhow, it keeps aphids, mites, loopers, bagworms and other insects under control. I try to drench the soil twice a month, partly because I don’t think the plant can absorb all the minor elements it needs through its foliage. It is a good practice to also use fertilizer cakes on the soil surface which feeds the plants a bit every time you water. Commercial water soluble fertilizers that wash out with the next watering, result in poorly fed pale bonsai. They are intended for use in soil that retains water for a long period, such as commercial house plant mixes.

There is a commercial product called Garret Juice which uses compost tea, dried seaweed, water, molasses and vinegar. It can work as a fertilizer but does not seem to work as well as an insecticide.

Late March or early April is when I repot trees like Dwarf Yaupon Holly and Boxwood. They do well afterwards if kept in light shade and out of the wind. Repotting for the hardy bonsai has ended and it may be too early for the tropicals. Depending on the current temperatures, some tropicals may be repotted by the end of April.
If you have early blooming azaleas, you should remove some of the buds. Most azaleas have way too many buds to look good when they do not have enough room to open fully.

So what is left to do? Just trimming, feeding, trimming, check for insects, trimming, shows, and trimming. You get the idea. Trimming, or pinching, plucking new growth, is the process that develops refinement on your tree, and keeps the foliage from growing out of shape. This is not pruning, which is cutting of branches. It should not be done while there is a strong sap flow, especially right after the tree breaks dormancy. The flow will continue until after the leaves harden or later.

If you think I repeat this process too much, keep in mind I did so for beginners. On elms and other trees with leaves appearing alternately down the shoot, when 5 new leaves grow out, start cutting back to 2 or 3 leaves, leaving the last leaf on the side that you want the new growth to appear. On maples and others with leaves coming in pairs on opposite sides of the twig, if you let them grow freely, you’ll get very long internodes. Cut the center shoot as soon as you can determine it to encourage the branch splitting in a Y, to form a nice ramification. Tweezers work best for this operation. Since the shoots do not open all at the same time, for best results, repeat this trimming daily.

Be sure you check the soil each day for proper water content. It is easy to assume that the soil has plenty of water when the days are cool or there has been some rain. A tree with full leaves may shed rain water outside of the pot or a good sun in low humidity after a front will dry out the soil. I suggest that you remove some of the moss so that you can see and feel the soil in order to determine how dry it is. (Moss growing on the trunk or roots will also cause the bark to rot.)

An automatic watering system will be an aid but you should not rely on it to replace hand watering. Best to use it for a shot of watering in the morning and again at noon, then do hand watering in the evening. Most automatic systems just water a spot or two in the pot. Hand watering covers the entire pot and allows you to adjust the watering for each tree individually and lets you see that the pot is draining properly. A clogged drainage hole can drown some trees in less than a week.

Most trees will do well in full sun at this time of year. However, if you have had them in partial shade, be careful when moving them directly to full sun. They probably should be acclimated gradually. Too much wind may burn the new leaves but that damage may not show up until hot weather.

John Miller

John Miller, who writes a monthly column for the Bonsai Society of Dallas and Fort Worth Bonsai Society, has agreed to share his column with us. We need to make adjustments for our warmer and damper climate, with earlier springs, longer summers, late fall and erratic winters.

President’s Letter

April is going to be a big and different month for HBS. Bonsai on the Bayou kicks off in just over three weeks and many of us are hustling to prepare trees and make sure the convention has been planned as well as we can.

A big difference this month is that WE WILL NOT HAVE OUR REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING ON APRIL 6. Instead, we will have a volunteer orientation meeting for the convention. On April 6, we will meet at Pete Parker’s house (4906 Pagosa Falls Ct Katy, TX 77494) from 10-12.

At the orientation meeting, we will be going over how the convention is set up and will progress. We will also be looking for volunteers for some areas, assembling registration packages, and cleaning up some of the trees for the workshops.

If you would like to get advice on a tree that you are entering in the exhibition, or the display you have planned, bring it to the orientation meeting and we’ll make sure you get all the advice that you need (and maybe a little more).

Pete Parker
It's time for

Thursday April 11
4 – 6 PM
Briarpark 1 & 2

This is not just your run of the mill JEOPARDY game.

We're talking Bonsai Jeopardy!

Think you know your bonsai facts?
Then you must sign up! My spies tells me that other clubs from around the country have been in serious training and they have every intention to come to Houston and walk away with the Bonsai Booty.

Can't wait to watch a knock-down, drag out match at Bonsai on the Bayou between teams from HBS and all other clubs, filled with merciless, steely-eyed men and women ready to compete on behalf of their club.

So pick 4 - 6 of your bonsai friends, a team name (keep it PG-13 please) and sign up with Scott Barboza at markyscott@icloud.com quick.

Scott Barboza

Exhibit Invitation

We hope that all who planned to exhibit bonsai trees, viewing stones and kusamono at the 2019 BONSAI ON THE BAYOU, already have started cleaning, trimming and polishing them.

Just to lift your spirit and give some a bit more incentives while performing intensive care of your prized work, here is a reminder about the prizes for many categories:

- ABS John Naka Award $500
- Best in Show $500
- Best Conifer $150
- Best Deciduous $150
- Best Shohin Tree $150
- Best Tropical $150
- Best Broadleaf Evergreen $150
- Best Texas Native Bonsai $150
- Best Shohin Display $150

- Best Viewing Stone Certificate
- Best Kusamono Certificate
- People's Choice Certificate

Whether you win a prize or two, or none, it will still be an undeniably thrilling and forever unforgettable experience to have your bonsai, kusamono and viewing stones exhibited at the convention shown in the best of light and permanent displayed in the BONSAI ON THE BAYOU 2019 Commemorative Album.

It will be published by the Houston Bonsai Society in a 10” x 8”, in full color and hardbound format. This is HBS' extra effort to make your participation in this event and exhibit a memorable experience, which you can share with families and friends for many years to come.

A professional photographer has been hired to set up an on-site studio during the show and to provide high resolution photographs of your work. Our volunteers will bring your exhibited items to the studio for the photo shoots on Thursday April 10 and Friday the 11th, and return them to the exhibit hall. Some of you may be familiar with the high cost of publishing a book...
filled with photos in full color and the challenge in quality control, so you would understand why only entries shot by our professional photographer under the best lighting, in our on-site studio would be used in this album. The cost of each professional photograph is $50, paid by the owner. You will receive a very high-resolution image file which you can enlarge to poster size print without loss of resolution. That same image will appear in the commemorative album.

The front hard cover will feature the winning Best of Show bonsai. The album will have about 60 pages, printed on high quality glossy paper. A write up will accompany each image, including name of the tree/kusamono/viewing stone, pot information, size, background information and owner’s name.

Here is a mark-up page using image from the previous LSBF exhibit, with brief history of the tree, the number of years it took to achieve such works of art. Please note that the image has been blurred out on purpose, unlike the extremely sharp high resolution images you will get. Word your bonsai entries’ information as you wish to see it in the book.

To make sure you will get the number of albums you want, please put in your order early when you submit your entry forms or at the convention. We will only print the exact number of copies ordered. Cost is $40 per copy, plus $7 S/H to your address.

Hoe Chuah

Satsuki Azalea cv. Wakaebisu (Rhododendrum indicum)
This 14” tall kifu size Satsuki azalea was grown by Hoe Chuah from a one-gallon nursery plant in the ground for 7-8 years to develop the trunk taper and nebari. It was lifted from the ground and potted for bonsai development in 2007.

What’s this? Less than a month until Bonsai on the Bayou??! This will be a very special event and there is a lot to be excited about. First, this is so far the largest bonsai convention in Texas. As of this writing, we have over 200 full registrations, but adding that number to the people issued visitor passes, we will have the largest number of attendees ever. They’re coming from India, South Africa, Canada, Mexico and all over the US. We are truly excited if not a bit overwhelmed by the response. There is still time to register to be a part of it all. If you’ve already registered, make your hotel reservations ASAP. We just asked the hotel to release another block of rooms for our guests at the low convention rate. Book now and save! They won’t last long.

What’s generated all of the excitement? A fantastic line-up of great artists, tons of quality workshop material, the chance to have NEW convention experiences, an exhibition of some of the finest bonsai in the region and the country, AND a wide range of FREE content included with your registration.

First, the artists! There are 21 WORLD CLASS ARTISTS participating in Bonsai on the Bayou. There has never been an opportunity to learn from a such high quality line-up of artists and teachers assembled for a single event. Our three, internationally renowned headliners, Enrique Castaño, Boon Manakitivipart and Ryan Neil, were selected not only because of their great artistry, but because of the time and energy they spend over the years on teaching the art and techniques of bonsai.
These teachers are from Mexico, the UK, and all over the US. Many are classically trained but all are very highly experienced.

What’s this about FREE content?
There’s a lot of it. First, as with previous conventions, registered attendees can visit any of the 15 workshops as an observer for no additional cost. Second, there are 12 no additional cost seminars that registered guests can attend, including presentations by some of our headline artists.

How to take care of your bonsai tools?
We’ve got you covered!

How to build an irrigation system?
Got you covered!

What’s the future of American Bonsai?
Again, got you covered!

Finally, visiting the convention to enjoy the trees in the Exhibition Hall and the Vendor Hall is totally free. Just stop by the Registration Desk to pick up your Visitor Pass. We want everyone to be able to enjoy the exhibit and shop with our fantastic group of bonsai vendors.

What’s this about NEW experiences?
Tired of those giant demonstrations where you’re miles away from the artists and can’t see or hear a thing? The 2019 convention will be first to introduce the Artist Spotlights concept, sort of a Bonsai Theater in the Round, a great opportunity to see and enjoy something new and different. Attendance is limited to a small group format, to ensure that everyone present will have a chance to interact with the artists. Every step of the demo can be observed up close, when the artists start the initial styling till the last finishing touch. They will also address the maintenance regimen for those trees.

Want to learn more?
Head over to the Bonsai on the Bayou Facebook page or the HBS website and check out all of the information there. But most of all, please come to the convention - even if it’s only for a visit.

We’re very excited and proud to be hosting this important event in Houston and we think that you’re going to love it to. You won’t see another convention like this in Houston for a VERY long time.
Let’s give the world a BIG Texas Welcome!

Scott Barboza

To complement Scott’s outstanding report, our HBS own PR and Publicity Ken Cousino has his own very exciting achievements to share. Please join me in giving Ken a standing ovation for his untiring efforts in introducing not only Houston Bonsai Society to the local communities but also the Art of Bonsai to the City of Houston (meaning to the mayor Sylvester Turner himself).

Last Minute Report from Ken Cousino

It's looking like the upcoming 2019 American Bonsai Society national convention Bonsai on the Bayou: An American Bonsai Summit will be the largest ever in Houston Bonsai Society (HBS) history, as well as Lone Star Bonsai Federation (LSBF) history.

Remember the dates of April 11 -14 and the location, Houston Marriott Westchase, and plan on attending the convention the whole weekend, a day, or even a few hours to see some of the best bonsai trees the US has to offer. Some of the most recognized bonsai artists in this part of the world will be there to conduct seminars, lecture-demos and workshops that will elevate all interested bonsai artists! You can meet them in person and learn from them too!

The convention will kick off on Thursday April 11 afternoon with welcome remarks from ABS President Mark Fields from Indiana and HBS and LSBF President, and convention Chair, Pete Parker as part of the ribbon cutting ceremony.

Houston’s mayor Sylvester Turner has recognized this weekend’s event and officially proclaimed the convention A Day Celebrating the Art of Bonsai. The mayor has written a letter to welcome all conventioneers to Houston. A copy will be distributed to all guests.

Attendees will be greeted in the hotel lobby by a 14-musician Mariachi band as well as a Texas super-sized Saikei named Bonsai on the Bayou. Don’t let the alligators bite you.

A big thank you to those of you who have been preparing your bonsai, kusamono and viewing stones for exhibition. The 4,700 square foot exhibit room will be FILLED with entries from across the state and the country, with over 100 trees, kusamono companion plants and viewing stones! It was not easy, and we appreciate your hard work, your meticulous wiring, careful fertilization, kusamono grooming, scroll collecting, moss cultivation, and not to forget, cleaning and oiling of the show pots and stones!

For those searching for unique works of bonsai art to take home, the planning committee has invited over 20 bonsai vendors from across the country. There will be beautiful trees of many varieties, tools, beautiful pots from our favorite potters, display stands and supplies of all sorts, even
bonsai jewelry. A literal candy store for bonsai enthusiasts!

Many volunteers have signed up, but we always need more to assist the few department heads already wearing too many hats. So HBS members, if you’re inclined to participate as a volunteer, please contact Pete Parker at 832-656-0208.

Watch the Chronicle and Leader everyone! Brenda Beust Smith of The Lazy Gardener & Friends Houston Garden published a note about the convention last month, and has written another story about our convention for this month’s publication. Take a look at the excerpt of that fantastic article on the last page of this newsletter.

And don’t forget to watch for Pete’s appearance on Houston Life on April 5. Houston Life is a program that celebrates life in Houston with Derrick Shore and Courtney Zavala, on weekdays at 1 PM on KPRC Channel 2.

Please join me in cheering for Pete Parker, our HBS president, also chairman of this 2019 HBS/LSBF/ABS convention and LSBF president. That’s a lot of hats for one person, yet he is doing an amazing job at all those endeavors.

Ken Cousino

The HBS editor just received an updated newsletter from Steven Hendricks of the Shohin Society of Texas. This society meets quarterly at Persimmon Hill Bonsai, 12001 Red Hawk Cove in Austin, TX.

For those of you not familiar with Shohin bonsai, it’s the smaller sized trees, under 8”, probably the most favored size nowadays with the bonsai aficionados who no longer want to or can handle the bigger and heavier sized trees and pots.

If you are interested in joining this little trees club, please contact Steven Hendricks at 817-239-7210 or stevenhendricks@sbcglobal.net.

SHOHIN SOCIETY OF TEXAS

April 6, 2019 - 10AM till 2:30PM

DISPLAY SET UP
This month, we set up our display for the LSBF convention. This year, they are spotlighting shohin trees, so we really need to put together a respectable display. That means that we need everyone to bring in their best shohin. Have your trees neatly trimmed and pots cleaned. Look around for moss to cover the surface of your pot and bring in some very small accent plants. As an adjunct to setting up the display, Terry Ward will start us out with a discussion on tree display and tree refinement. That will allow the members to make more informed decisions when we pick out trees for the display.

LSBF CONVENTION
By now you all know that the convention will take place in Houston April 11-14, just a week following our meeting. Being a joint convention with the ABS, it will be a bigger event than usual, so don’t miss the chance to be there even if only for a day.

Our display trees must be at the exhibition staging area between 12 Noon and 6:00 PM, Thursday, April 11, 2019. So, if we choose one of your trees, be ready to have them there or make arrangements to have someone bring them.

WHAT TO BRING
Bring your best shohin trees neatly trimmed and in clean pots. If you have special display slabs or stands for your trees bring them as well. We have two tables so we may set up one with the multitermed stand and the other for larger stand-alone trees. And please, if you have a shohin conifer or pine we could sure use one for the top of the display.

ODDS and ENDS
Bring a brown bag lunch or enjoy hot dogs and all the trimmings provided by our S.S.O.T. Kitty. Vegetarian alternatives available by prior request. New folks are always welcome–from just beginning to bonsai veterans. Bring a friend to share the learning and camaraderie.
Dear HBS members,

The convention is just around the corner and we would like to remind all HBS members and friends that we are still working hard to collect donations for the 5 raffles to be held at the convention. There will be 2 raffles on Friday 4/12 and Saturday 4/13, one at Noon, the second at 6PM, and only one on Sunday 4/14 at Noon.

This is a great time to spring clean your home, attic, basement, garage and garden, for bonsai books, bonsai magazines, tools, pots, Ikebana vases, kusamono material, and healthy bonsai or pre-bonsai to donate to the raffles. Any other suitable non bonsai related items such as Asian arts, camping gear, even antiques and pet supplies are also welcomed.

If you have to have your donation stored somewhere that need to be picked up early, please contact Pete Parker at 832-656-0208.

It would be of great help to the organizing committee and all of the chairs if you drop off your donations at the Marriott Westchase hotel on Thursday April 11, when we start setting up the convention, any time after 12 Noon.

This American Bonsai Society convention will be the most memorable event HBS has ever hosted. We look forward to seeing everybody come join the fun and lend a helping hand to set up the tables and monitor each raffle. In fact, we can use at least 6 more volunteers.

Thank you in advance for your generous support to make this event a huge success.

Maria Grissom
Raffle chair
713-628-5842
pazitagrissom@yahoo.com
Go to Timeless Trees’ website and subscribe to weekly **Current Events** to stay in the know about weekly events and classes offered locally and about HBS activities. For almost a decade, Timeless Trees Nursery and Bonsai has provided novices and serious bonsai students a very wonderful environment to further their knowledge in the Art of Bonsai with workshops led by local artists and teachers, or on occasions, with one-on-one study with visiting bonsai masters. You can find all sizes of bonsai, of all varieties, great pots and display stands, supplies, fertilizers, soils, tools and books as well as gift certificates for your bonsai lovers and you. The resident bonsai guru Hurley is also the go-to man for all bonsai questions.

Quality Feed & Garden and the resident Dr. Ken stand ready to help you with fruit trees, bonsai trees, basic tools, pots and soils like Akadama, Lava, Pumice, Kanuma, and “Dr. Ken’s Special Bonsai Soil mixes in 10 lb. & 50 lb. bags. There are 2 separate nurseries at this location, one for garden shade and fruit trees, a second for decorative trees and bonsai.

Free bonsai classes are offered every 3 months for the Houston Bonsai Society study group. Newbies are welcome. While you explore this unique store, you can also pick up a few pet birds, chickens and ducks and their feed. HBS members get a 10% discount.

If you are looking for herbs, vegetables, citrus or fruit trees, flowering plants, orchids or bromeliads, and even aquatic plants to decorate your home, garden and ponds, JRN II got them all. The greenhouses are home to countless rare plants and exotic tropical bonsai, and the most unusual gifts for all occasions from birthdays, anniversaries, grand openings, house warming parties, to New Year celebration. Take a stroll in the shop and around the garden to check out the bonsai figurines, boats and pagodas, bonsai supplies, tools and soils as well as bonsai pots, garden statues and Japanese lanterns. You will never know what kind of surprise is waiting for you to take home.

For advice on all plants and bonsai, please ask Thuy Doan.

Visit artist Andrew Sankowski at the Mossrock Studio & Fine Art Gallery for the finest gifts and uniquely beautiful bonsai pots in every shape, form and color. If there is a potter who knows bonsai pots, it’s Andy. He keeps a greenhouse full of beautiful bonsai.

As a master potter who offers weekly pottery classes, Andy also mixes his own proprietary clay blends and over 100 of his own colored glazes. Bring your unusual trees for him to make unusual personalized pots. Pots for all purposes can be commissioned year round. While you are on the tour of gallery and studio, check out the masterpieces of many talented local artists.
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Space for advertising in The Bonsai News of Houston can be requested by contacting the newsletter editor or a member of the HBS Board. The rates for a business-card-size ad (approximately 3 1/2” x 2”) are $10 per month, and $75 per year (12 issues). A full-page ad is $50 per month. Rates are subject to change without notice. 3½” x 2” classified ads are run free of charge for one month once per 12-month period for non-commercial members. For special requests or questions related to The Bonsai News of Houston, contact the newsletter editor or a member of the HBS Board.
Please find below an excerpt of The Lazy Gardener & Friends Houston Garden newsletter that Brenda Beust Smith had written and sent to Ken Cousino after their meeting about the 2019 ABS convention. She urged Ken to share with anyone and everyone. So here it is for you to enjoy.

First a few lines about Brenda’s column.
Brenda’s column in the LAZY GARDENER & FRIENDS HOUSTON GARDEN NEWSLETTER is based on her 40+ years as the Houston Chronicle’s Lazy Gardener.

To sign up for this free, weekly Greater Houston area gardening report or to read past issues, go to www.natureswayresources.com

Want to invest in companies building a better world? Visit:  http://MoneySpentWell.org

If your New Year’s Resolutions include expanding gardening horizons, a great opportunity is coming up here: 2019 American Bonsai Society Convention. Bonsai is in the midst of a major popularity boom, and no wonder. This ancient Far East art of growing miniature trees in small pots, even indoors, fits right in with current trends -- if you'll forgive the audacity of taking such a simplistic approach to a very complex, sophisticated, exquisite art form. But, truth is, beginning bonsai is easy and fun to try. All you need: Advice from the experts!

Bonsai’s small size, low-care regime and easy adaption to local small-leaf, woody trees/shrubs make it simple to incorporate into -- and add an artistic touch to -- any décor. Even herbs like rosemary can be used. Just remember, outdoor plants/trees prefer to be outside. That often goes for bonsai too.

Best of all, it’s healthy. Just ask Feng Shui friends about the positive life energies it is said to draw into a room. Another bonus: bonsai can be incredibly long-lived. In Italy, Crespi Bonsai Museum is the home of the oldest Bonsai tree on Earth. Estimated age: 1,000 years old. And you can soon see the best of the best right here.

Bonsai enthusiasts from across the globe will convene in Houston April 11-14 for the 2019 American Bonsai Society Convention, co-hosted by the Houston Bonsai Society, at the Houston Marriott Westchase hotel.

The meet's Bonsai Exhibition will be a major public highlight with more than 100 trees companion plantings, and rocks called viewing stones on display. The numerous workshops still have opening for those who sign up for the Convention.

Click for details.  Houston Bonsai Society Facebook page